



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/049,569	02/15/2002	Klaus Ducker	MERCK 2378	7506

23599 7590 02/17/2005

MILLEN, WHITE, ZELANO & BRANIGAN, P.C.
2200 CLARENDON BLVD.
SUITE 1400
ARLINGTON, VA 22201

EXAMINER

ULM, JOHN D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1646

DATE MAILED: 02/17/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/049,569

Applicant(s)

DUCKER, KLAUS

Examiner

John D. Ulm

Art Unit

1646

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 November 2004.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 10 and 11 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

1) Claims 1 to 12 are pending in the instant application. Claims 1, 4 and 6 to 9 have been amended and claim 12 has been added as requested by Applicant in the correspondence filed 29 November of 2004.

2) Any objection or rejection of record that is not expressly repeated in this action has been overcome by Applicant's response and withdrawn.

3) The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

4) Claims 10 and 11 stand withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in the correspondence of 06 February of 2004. **A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancellation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.**

5) The disclosure stand objected to because it contains an embedded hyperlink and/or other form of browser-executable code for those reasons of record in section 3 of the previous office action. Applicant is required to delete the embedded hyperlink and/or other form of browser-executable code.

6) Claims 6 and 7 stand objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. A properly dependent claim can not conceivably be infringed without infringing any of the claims from which it depends. Claim 6 can be infringed by a polynucleotide vector that does not infringe the "isolated polypeptide" of claim 1. Claim 7 can be

Art Unit: 1646

infringed by a host cell that does not infringe the "isolated polypeptide" of claim 1. See M.P.E.P. 608.01(n)III.

7) Claims 1 to 9 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because they are drawn to an invention with no apparent or disclosed specific and substantial credible utility for those reasons of record as applied to claims 1 to 7 and 9 in section 6 of the previous office action. The instant claims are drawn to an isolated DNA encoding a protein and the protein encoded thereby. The instant application does not disclose a specific biological role for the claimed protein or its significance to a particular disease, disorder of physiological process which one would wish to manipulate for a desired clinical effect.

Applicant has traversed this rejection essentially on the premise that the claimed nucleic acid and the protein encoded thereby can be employed as a genetic or tissue marker and the employment of that nucleic acid or protein as a genetic or tissue marker is a credible, specific and substantial utility. The employment of a protein of the instant invention, or a nucleic acid encoding that protein, as a tissue specific marker or in the detection of gene expression is not a substantial or specific utility. All human proteins can invariably be classified into two categories, those which are expressed in a tissue or developmentally specific manner and those which are expressed ubiquitously. It can be alleged that any protein that is expressed in a tissue specific manner can be employed to detect the tissue in which it is expressed in a sample. Alternately, a human protein that is expressed ubiquitously can be employed to detect the presence of any human tissue in a sample. Such utilities are analogous to the assertion that a particular protein

Art Unit: 1646

can be employed as a molecular weight marker, which is neither a specific or substantial utility.

One could just as readily argue that any purified compound having a known structure could be employed as an analytical standard in such processes as nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR), infrared spectroscopy (IR), and mass spectroscopy as well as in polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE), high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and gas chromatography. None of these processes could be practiced without either calibration standards having known molecular structures or, at least, a range of molecular weight markers having known molecular weights. One could further extrapolate upon this premise by asserting that any item having a fixed measurable parameter can be employed to calibrate any machine or process which measures that parameter. For example, any item having a constant mass within an acceptable range can be employed to calibrate a produce scale in a grocery store. The calibration of produce scales is certainly an important function since most states require produce scales to be calibrated and certified. Therefore, to accept Applicant's arguments that any nucleic acid encoding any protein of human origin is useful as a marker would be comparable to conceding that any object of fixed mass has *prima facie* utility as a weight standard, irrespective of any other properties possessed by that object. It was just such applications that the court appeared to be referring to when it expressed the opinion that all chemical compounds are "useful" to the chemical arts when this term is given its broadest interpretation (*Brenner v. Manson*, 148 U.S.P.Q. 689 (Sus. Ct, 1966)). Because the steroid compound which was the subject of that

Art Unit: 1646

decision had a known structure and molecular weight it could have readily been employed as a molecular standard at that time. Further, because that compound was a hydrocarbon it certainly could have been employed in the well known process of combustion for purposes of lighting and/ or the generation of heat. The generation of heat by combustion of hydrocarbons certainly was and remains an important process. Irrespective of such obvious utilities, the court still held that the compound produced by the process at issue in *Brenner v. Manson* did not have a specific and substantial utility.

To grant Applicant a patent encompassing an isolated polynucleotide encoding a naturally occurring human protein of as yet undetermined biological significance would be to grant Applicant a monopoly "the metes and bounds" of which "are not capable of precise delineation". That monopoly "may engross a vast, unknown, and perhaps unknowable area" and "confer power to block off whole areas of scientific development, without compensating benefit to the public" (*Brenner v. Manson, Ibid*). To grant Applicant a patent on the claimed polynucleotide based solely upon an assertion that the protein encoded thereby can be employed as a tissue marker is clearly prohibited by this judicial precedent since the compensation to the public is not commensurate with the monopoly granted and would be no different than granting a patent on the process disputed in *Brenner v. Manson* on the premise that the steroid produced thereby was useful as an analytical standard or as a combustible fuel source.

Applicant's arguments in relation to the newly discovered utility for GalR1 is irrelevant to the instant claims, which do not encompass GalR1. Further, it is noted that the instant specification does not appear to have even disclosed this critical information

Art Unit: 1646

for GalR1. An invention must be patentable at the time that an application is filed.

Applicant may not rely upon subsequent discoveries to complete the claimed invention.

In the decision *In re Lundberg*, 117 USPQ 190, 1958, the CCPA held that "advantages which are not disclosed in application cannot be urged as basis for allowing claims"

Applicant has urged that a protein of the instant invention has utility because a description of its amino acid sequence is in a published database. As stated by the court citation in the original rejection (*Brenner v. Manson*, 148 U.S.P.Q. 689 (Sus. Ct, 1966)) "little or nothing is wholly beyond the pale of "utility"- if that word is given its broadest reach". In that decision, the steroid compound produced by the claimed process was known in the art and was of scientific interest to steroid biochemists. However, a process of producing that compound was found to lack utility under 35 USC 101 because the compound produced thereby did not have a specific and substantial utility in currently available form. Any naturally occurring human protein, like that of the instant invention, is clearly of scientific interest. But serving as the object of further research does not constitute a specific and substantial utility for that protein in its currently available form.

8) Claims 1 to 9 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to adequately teach how to use the instant invention for those reasons given above with regard to the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

9) Claims 4 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

9.1) Claim 4 is vague and indefinite because the limitation “under stringent hybridization conditions” is conditional and no single set of defining conditions is recited in the claim or provided by the instant specification.

9.2) Claim 12 is vague and indefinite because there is no antecedent basis for “A method of claim 4”.

10) Applicant’s arguments filed 29 November of 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive for those reasons given above.

11) **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John D. Ulm whose telephone number is (571) 272-0880. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00AM to 5:30PM.

Art Unit: 1646

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anthony Caputa can be reached on (571) 272-0829. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



JOHN ULM
PRIMARY EXAMINER
GROUP 1600